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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE
NATURE, CAUSES AND CURE

OF

MELANCHOLY;

ESPECIALLY

Of that which is commonly called

RELIGIOUS MELANCHOLY.

By BENJAMIN FAWCETT, A.M.

*with an acc't. of the Author.
in a preface by Rev. J. Oulton*

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded
spirit who can bear? Prov. xviii. 24.

For his anger endureth but for a moment; in his favour is
life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in
the morning. Psalm xxx. 5.

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W. Musgrave



P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following Treatise, some months after he had finished it, was seized with a very violent and painful disease, which rendered him incapable of adding a Preface to it. He hath therefore consigned this work to me. I have little to say to the reader but this, that after a careful and repeated perusal of it, I think it well calculated, under a divine blessing, to afford direction and comfort to those who seriously read it; especially those, whose afflicted cases it particularly describes and considers. Some Tract of this kind was much wanted, as the subject hath been only touched upon occasionally by most practical writers; and those few, who have written directly upon it, especially Mr. *Timothy Rogers*, have handled it so largely and in so confused a method, that their books are not so proper to put into the hands of the melancholy and dejected, who seem, above all other readers, to require what is clear, concise and directly to the point. There may be some things in this book, concerning which all sincere christians are not of one mind. I therefore say, with Mr. *Baxter*, "I never undertake to justify every word in my own books or any others, while we confess that we are not absolutely infallible." Yet I may be allowed to add, without any disparagement to other men's labours, that I have not met with any book on this important subject, better adapted to the case of doubting and disconsolate christians. The Author hath wisely availed himself of the judgment and authority of some of the most learned, judicious and respectable writers among divines and physicians; particularly of those, who were most remote from

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superstition,

superstition, enthusiasm and any hasty judgement in such pitiable cases I recommend this work to the careful perusal of those, whose circumstances it considers. If they are incapable of reading it, or, by their disorder, averse and indisposed to it, it would be a signal act of kindness in their sympathizing friends to read it to them, as they can bear it; or to converse with them on the hints, directions and encouragements here given. I heartily pray, that the spirit of consolation may bless this work, as the means of comforting the feeble-minded and raising up them that are bowed down under the grievous weight of fears, doubts and suspicions. And may the benevolent Author, who hath long been preaching good tidings to the meek, and binding-up the broken-hearted, with much tenderness, acceptance and success, have great reason to rejoice, in the day of Christ, that in all his attempts to do good, especially this, he hath not laboured in vain.

Kidderminster,
Oct. 10, 1780.

J. ORTON.

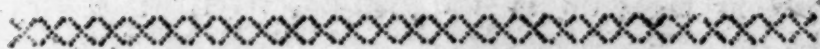
P. S. When this book was nearly printed, the pious Author of it, after about three months confinement under a languishing and painful sickness, finished his course October 18, 1780, in the 66th year of his age. During his illness he largely experienced the supports and consolations of the gospel; and was quite free from those melancholy and discouraging apprehensions, which he here describes. He is now doubtless among those happy souls, from whom distressing doubts and fears are forever banished. May this his last attempt to serve the interest of religion be signally blessed, and made very successful, to rectify mistaken consciences, and revive, comfort and improve mourning and disconsolate spirits, and thus encrease his own glory and joy.



J. O.



OBSERVATIONS, &c.



CHAP. I.

The SYMPTOMS of MELANCHOLY.

MAN is *fearfully and wonderfully made*, and preserved, and in many instances as wonderfully afflicted. Melancholy is one of those diseases, in which the dispensations of unerring providence are dark and unaccountable.

“ There is, says an ingenious physician, a disease which sometimes affects the body, and afterwards communicates its baneful influence to the mind, over which it hangs such a cloud of horrors as renders life absolutely insupportable. In this dreadful state, every pleasing idea is banished, and all the sources of comfort in life are poisoned. Neither fortune, honours, friends, nor family, can afford the smallest satisfaction. Hope, the last pillar of the wretched, falls to the ground.

B

“ Despair

“ Despair lays hold of the abandoned sufferer; then
 “ all reasoning becomes vain; even arguments of
 “ religion have no weight.” *

Another eminent physician expressly mentions
 “ Melancholy among the variety of nervous dis-
 “ eases.” To illustrate the propriety of this, he
 observes, “ That although not a few of the mo-
 “ derns, following the opinion of the ancient phy-
 “ sicians, have supposed the hypochondriac disease
 “ to be owing to an atrabiliary [black bilious] hu-
 “ mour produced in the stomach, liver, or spleen,
 “ yet, in many hypochondriac patients, there is no
 “ such humour; and where it is observed, it is
 “ only a symptom or consequence of that disease,
 “ and not its original cause.” Concerning the
 nerves, the diseases of which are so numerous, and
 so very distressing, as particularly appears in that
 of which we now treat, this great professor of me-
 dicine modestly confesses, “ We can have no idea
 “ of the extreme smallness of the nervous tubes;
 “ and the subtilty of that fluid which they contain
 “ makes us altogether ignorant of its peculiar na-
 “ ture and properties.” And, worthy of a pious
 philosopher, he concludes, “ In every part, even of
 “ the inanimate world, we find inexpressible diffi-
 “ culties. What wonder then, if, in the human
 “ body, a system so curious, so subtle, and com-
 “ pounded, we should meet with many appearances
 “ which we cannot at all account for. The far-
 “ ther we push our inquiries into nature, the more
 “ shall we be convinced of our ignorance, and how
 “ small

* *Dr. Moore's view of society in France, &c. vol. 1. p. 307, 308.*

Ch. I. *The SYMPTOMS of MELANCHOLY.* 3

“small a portion is known of the works of the great
“Creator.” †

I am the more desirous to avail myself of the judgment of the best writers in medicine, because it is very difficult to convince persons afflicted with melancholy, that their distemper arises from the body, and is from thence communicated to the mind; and because the friends of such are so prone to mistake the case, as either to pronounce it nothing but the effect of imagination or vapours, and so to despise it; or, as unreasonably in the other extreme, to conclude it is madness, and therefore nothing is to be done but to treat their friends accordingly. If the symptoms of this bodily, this nervous disease be duly attended to, both the patients themselves, and their friends, may be led to judge and act with less confidence and precipitation, with greater caution and tenderness. But while I proceed to mention the usual symptoms of this disease, I shall omit many of those which more immediately fall under the observation of physicians, and shall chiefly confine myself to such as may be most likely to carry conviction to persons themselves who are afflicted with it, or to their affectionate, though not medical, friends.

“The principal sign, by which we may judge
“when the indisposition is chiefly or wholly in
“the body, is this; that the person accuses him-
“self highly *in general*, without being able to give
“any instance *in particular*; that he is very ap-
B 2 “prehesive

† Dr. Whytt's observations on the nature, causes and cure of those diseases which have commonly been called nervous, hypochondriac, and hysseric, p. 2, 84, 242, 311.

“prehenſive, of he does not well know what; and
 “fearful, yet can give no reaſon why.”† It is
 a kind of dotage or delirium, but “without any
 “fever.”§ “It ſeizes the ſpirits, interrupts ſleep,
 “and unfits for regular thought and action.”*

This principal ſymptom, viz. fearfulneſs, may be
 traced, in ſome degree, through every different ſtage
 and appearance of the diſeaſe; whether it puts on
 the milder form of *dejection and lowneſs of ſpirits*;
 or when it increaſes to *diſtreſs and anguiſh*; or in
 its dreadful extreme of *horrible deſpair*. — Hence
 it comes to paſs, that a perſon has much *ſadneſs*,
 without any apparent cauſe. If he happens to ſmile,
 or ſpeak chearfully, his heart ſmites him for it, as
 if he had committed ſome great crime. To rejoice
 in any thing, however deſerving of his joy, is to
 him an inſuperable difficulty. If a danger is but
 poſſible, he ſpeaks of it as probable, and even cer-
 tain; or of any common calamity, as if it was
 utter ruin. “The firſt ſymptoms which indicate a
 “weakneſs of the nervous ſyſtem (ſays Dr. Tiffot,
 “a celebrated phyſician of Switzerland) are a
 “kind of puſillanimity we were before ſtrangers
 “to; diffidence, fear, and diſpiritedneſs; he who
 “was the moſt intrepid man, now becomes the
 “moſt timorous; the ſlighteſt undertaking fright-
 “ens him; the moſt trifling unforeſeen incident
 “makes him tremble; the ſlighteſt indispoſition
 “appears to him a fatal diſeaſe; and the idea of
 “death

† Dr. Clarke's ſermon of religious melancholy. vol. x. 8vo. p. 319.

§ Burton's anatomy of melancholy. fol. p. 18.

* Baxter's practical works, vol. i, p. 248—250.

"death fills him with horrors." † — When *dejection* grows up to *distress*, then a person feels himself as unable, and it seems to him as fruitless, to strive against his disease, as against a fever, or the gout, or stone. Though his case be the same with many others, yet he is prone to look upon it as singular, and without any example or precedent, and to say, that no one was ever afflicted as he is. He loves to be alone, and is afraid and weary of company; yet is apt to be as much displeased and discontented with himself, as peevish and envious persons are to be displeased with others. His thoughts are most of all about himself, in unprofitable, or rather mischievous anxiety. His mind is in continual perplexity, as if he was groping in the dark, encompassed with difficulties, from which he cannot be extricated. He cannot turn his thoughts to other subjects, any more than a man in the tooth-ach can avoid thinking of his pain. Such fixedness in his musing seems to be his chief employment, and a considerable part of his disease. He is very averse to a course of action, suitable to his station in life, and would rather lie long in bed, or sit long by himself. He is untractable, hardly to be persuaded out of the most unreasonable conceits, and is seldom better for any advice: For if it seems to compose him for the present, in a little while he is as bad as ever. He will not believe himself to be melancholy, hates to be told so, and therefore cannot be prevailed upon to take medicines, or use any other means for his bodily health, confident that all the disorder is in his mind. If

† Dr. Tissot on the diseases incident to literary and sedentary persons.
p. 25. second edition.

If such *distress* is extreme, it may issue in the horrors of *despair*. In this awful situation, a person will often say, "I am undone! I am forsaken! "I am absolutely miserable!" If he passes over a bridge, he is for leaping into the water. If he sees a knife, he thinks he must use it for destroying himself. He imagines something says to him, "Do it now, do it now." He looks upon his nearest and dearest friends and relations, either as strangers or enemies. His condition is as a *land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.*

Bad as these symptoms are, even those of them that are most moderate; yet, says Dr. *Whytt*, "Like many other pernicious complaints, melancholy is more troublesome and lasting than dangerous." † The Rev. *Timothy Rogers*, who was exercised with long and deep melancholy, and after his recovery published a *treatise* on the subject, observes, "That of itself, it very rarely kills any person." § Another great writer says of it, "Among many inconveniences, some comforts are annexed to it. It is a more durable enemy than dangerous. It is not catching. It is wholly to the patients themselves. Their solitariness makes them contemplative. Their suspicion makes them wary. Fear and sorrow keep them temperate and sober. Weary of life, they are not so soon besotted with the transitory vain pleasures of the world. If they dote in one thing, they are wise and well-understanding in most other. They are no
"dissemblers,

† Ibid. p. 329.

§ *Rogers on melancholy, Preface, p. xx.*

Ch. I. *The SYMPTOMS of MELANCHOLY.* 7

“dissemblers, lyars, hypocrites. As they are distressed, so they are pitied.” *

Surely the symptoms of this disease, even in its most moderate state, must convince us, that it first affects the body; or, at least, that there is in the body a previous disposition to it; and afterwards communicates its pernicious influence to the mind; that it is productive of great misery, and is much to be pitied, but by no means to be despised or neglected. It is impossible for any one to ascertain his perpetual freedom from it; whether he be high or low, rich or poor, virtuous or vicious; no, not the most gay and chearful.

No one was more the man of wit and pleasure than *Horace*, a celebrated heathen poet. Yet, in an epistle to a friend, he has the following natural though undesigned language of an hypochondriac,

“Say, though I threaten many a vast design,
“Nor happiness, nor wisdom yet are mine.
“Not that the driving hail my vineyards beat;
“Not that my olives are destroy’d with heat;
“Not that my cattle pine in foreign plains.—
“More in my mind than body lie my pains.
“Reading I hate, and with unwilling ear
“The voice of comfort, or of health I hear.
“Friends or physicians I with pain endure,
“Who strive this languor of my soul to cure.
“Whate’er may hurt me, I with joy pursue;
“Whate’er may do me good, with horror view.
“Inconstant as the wind, I various rove;
“At Tibur, Rome; at Rome, I Tibur love.”

His ingenious translator observes, on the above lines,

“If *Horace*, as his commentators understand him,

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“intended

* *Burton's anatomy of melancholy*, *ibid.* p. 225.

The SYMPTOMS of MELANCHOLY. Ch. r.

“intended to draw his own picture in this epistle,
“it must be confessed, it is very little like the joy-
“ous carelessness of his life in general. In almost
“perfect health; possessed of an easy fortune;
“(basking in the smiles of a court, — as Mr.
“Francis might have added) and supported by a
“good understanding, he makes himself miserable
“by causeless disquietudes, and an unaccountable
“waywardness of temper. There are indeed too
“many instances of these weaknesses among man-
“kind, but our author’s epicurean principles were
“of a more chearful kind. — This inconstancy of
“temper is the more deplorable, as it is almost
“incurable. It puts the whole mind out of order,
“and taints every object of every sense.”†

*All things come alike to all, there is one event to
the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to
the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth,
and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is
the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth
an oath. This is an evil among all things that are
done under the sun, that there is one event unto all.—
As for the friends of those that are thus afflicted,
they have so much pain, from what they see and
hear, day after day, and perhaps one month after
another, that they cannot avoid pronouncing it one
of the worst distempers to which human nature is
liable.*

† Francis’s *Horace*, vol. iv. l. 1. ep. 8.



CHAP. II.

The CAUSES in general of MELANCHOLY.

NEXT to divine providence, the principal cause of this disease, it may be truly said, is a particular disposition to it, in the constitution, frame, or state of the body. Other secondary causes do but concur with such a disposition. It is indeed the province of the skilful physician to attend to and discern this. To such a one we are all attention, while he says, "How much soever we may be in the dark about the immediate causes of the diseases of the nerves, yet their effects may all be reduced to some change in that sensibility or moving power, which the nerves communicate to the different parts of the body." And again, "Those disorders may, peculiarly, deserve the name of nervous, which, on account of an unusual delicacy, or unnatural state of the nerves, are produced by causes, which, in people of a sound constitution, would either have no such effects, or at least in a much less degree." Here we learn to form some idea of the causes of what is called a constitutional or hereditary melancholy. There are some persons, in whom this disease returns at different periods of life, so that their constitutions appear to have an habitual tendency to it. There

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are

† Dr. Wbytt, *ibid.* p. 87, 88, 93, 94.

are others, who are able distinctly to tell how their own afflicted case exactly corresponds with that of their progenitors, and consequently that they have derived from them such a disordered state of nerves as is productive of this disease.

We can more easily follow this medical writer, when, after tracing the *general occasional causes* of nervous, hypochondriac, and hysteric disorders to the state of the blood, he proceeds to a variety of *particular occasional causes* of such disorders; amongst which he mentions, "Violent affections of the mind, whether excited by external objects, or by the exercise of the internal senses; as for instance, doleful or moving stories, horrible and affecting sights, great grief, anger, terror and other passions." He also adds, "That sudden terror, excessive grief, or other violent passions of the mind, in people whose nervous system is very delicate, may affect the brain, so as to produce a continual mania or melancholy. But in what manner the passions, or the morbid matter of nervous diseases, change the state of the brain, or common sensorium, and occasion such disorders, is intirely unknown." § "Nothing, says Dr. *Tissot*, can contribute more to health than cheerfulness, which is animated by society, and damped by retirement; and this moral cause of weariness, added to the physical causes, often throws the learned into a melancholy, as fatal to their health as cheerfulness would be beneficial to it; it brings on misanthropy, a fretful temper, a spirit of discontent, and a dislike to every thing, which

" may

§ Dr. *Whytt*, *ibid.* p. 212, 315.

Ch. 2. *The CAUSES in general of MELANCHOLY.* II

“ may be considered as the greatest of evils, since
“ they deprive us of the enjoyment of all that is
“ good.—Melancholy is real madness, when at its
“ height.—Study, says Dr. *Boerhaave*, begins by im-
“ pairing the stomach; and if the complaint is not
“ removed, it may degenerate into a melancholy.”*

Thus we are justified in the following enumeration of the particular causes which often occasion this disease. When either the thoughts or affections are overstrained. When too deep an impression is made upon them by some worldly loss, or disappointment, some anxious care, or heavy load of trouble. When excessive fear is excited, whether the apprehension of danger may arise from circumstances more or less common. When studies are pursued with too long and too much attention, and without proper intermission. When the powers of imagination and invention are put upon the rack. When the reasoning powers are naturally but feeble, and the passions are pushed forward like an impetuous torrent. “ When exercise is unseasonable, violent, and immoderate; for nothing
“ is so good, but it may be abused. Especially
“ idleness, which is the bane of body and mind.
“ There is nothing better than moderate, but no-
“ thing worse than extreme or unseasonable sleep.
“ Too much severity or remissness in education,
“ scoffs, calumnies, or bitter jests; imprisonment,
“ poverty and want, or the death of friends. It is
“ hard to decide, which of these two, the body and
“ soul, do more harm to each other.”†

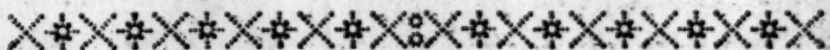
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All

* Dr. *Tiffot*, *ibid.* p. 23, 74, 75, 88.

† *Burton's anat. of melancholy*, *ibid.* p. 50, 54, 76, 88, 90—94.

All these causes of melancholy, or any other that might be mentioned, are ever to be considered as under the direction, disposal and determination of divine providence as the first cause. *A sparrow shall not fall to the ground without our heavenly Father ; and the very hairs of our head are all numbered.* And while the afflicting hand of God is to be acknowledged in this, as well as in all other diseases, and in every step by which it advances, or prevails, the same is undoubtedly to be said of its cure, of which we are next to speak.



CHAP. III.

The CURE *of* MELANCHOLY.

THE eminent writer on nervous, hypochondriac and hysteric disorders, to whom I have so often referred, when he is treating of their cure, suggests what is peculiarly suitable to the disease of melancholy. "As it is generally, says he, in the power of medicine to relieve, it is frequently beyond the power of art to eradicate these disorders; and therefore it may be often of use to intimate this to our patients; especially to such as have fortitude enough to bear those evils, which can neither be wholly prevented, nor fully cured. It is farther necessary to acquaint every patient, that without a long perseverance in a course

“course of medicine, diet, and exercise, no great
“or lasting benefit is to be expected.” Dr. *Tiffot*
also says, “Disorders seated in the brain scarce ad-
“mit of a radical cure; it recovers its powers with
“more difficulty than any other organ.” †

Dr. *Whytt* more particularly observes, “That
“the frequency, now a-days, of nervous ailments,
“as they are commonly called, may be partly ow-
“ing to the too great use of tea.” This remark
is a sufficient reason for advising all those, whose
constitutions are disposed to melancholy, and the
friends of those who are under the disease, to en-
deavour to have it totally laid aside. To such
valetudinarians Dr. *Tiffot* refers, when he says,
“The tea-pots full of warm water I see upon
“their tables, put me in mind of Pandora’s box,
“from whence all sorts of evils issue forth, with
“this difference however, that they do not even
“leave the hopes of relief behind them; but, on
“the contrary, by inducing hypochondriac com-
“plaints, diffuse melancholy and despair. §

Dr. *Whytt* adds, “Without the assistance of ex-
“ercise, especially riding on horse-back, the most
“powerful medicines will prove often ineffectual.
“Friction of the legs, arms, trunk of the body,
“and abdomen (belly) with a flesh-brush, or flan-
“nel, or a coarse linen cloth, is a kind of exercise
“that strengthens and promotes circulation, and is
“particularly happy when the bowels are weak.
“Lying too long in bed will weaken and relax,
“while early rising, like gentle exercise and cool
“air, will brace and invigorate the body. The
“mind

† Dr. *Tiffot*, *ibid*, p. 96.§ Dr. *Tiffot*, *ibid*. p. 142, 143.

" mind ought to be diverted, and kept as easy and
 " chearful as possible; since nothing hurts more
 " the nervous system, and particularly the concoctive powers, than fear, grief, or anxiety. These
 " remedies must often be used a considerable time
 " before they can produce any considerable effect.
 " — When low spirits or melancholy have been
 " owing to long continued grief, anxious thoughts,
 " or other distress of mind, nothing has done more
 " service than agreeable company, daily exercise,
 " especially travelling, and a variety of amusements. *

The friction, here recommended, may be especially useful to many of both sexes, whose way of life does not employ them in a degree of bodily exercise sufficient for continued health. " I comprehend," says Dr. *Tissot*, young ladies also, whose sedentary life often disturbs their health, and I may even venture to say, the happiness of society."† When Dr. *Cheyne* at *Bath* was consulted by ministers, after examining their symptoms, he usually exclaimed, " Nervous! Hypochondriac! Right parson's constitution!" But where, even, ministers have used, either constant riding, or friction, together with standing, always to read and write, their chearfulness has been observed to be as little interrupted as that of any other men. In 1758 I had an interview with an eminent minister, then about 72, who had used the flesh-brush 40 years, and who had always been remarkable for his activity and chearfulness, which he continued to enjoy,

* Dr. *Wytt*, *ibid.* p. 332, 354, 355, 357, 358, 520.

† Dr. *Tissot*, *ibid.* p. 103, 104.

joy, with very little interruption, till he was 85. Another aged and very healthful minister, whose publications were voluminous, told me, that his tutor advised him and other students to stand always to read and write. He added, that he himself and some others had followed the advice to their great advantage, but those who had not done so, had greatly suffered by chronical diseases. "The attitude of a man at study, says Dr. *Tiffot*, cannot but be prejudicial to health. The folds the vessels are thrown into at the top of the thigh and in the bend of the knee, while a man is sitting, interrupt the circulation in the lower extremities, which in process of time must necessarily suffer from this circumstance; the bending of the body constrains the abdominal viscera, disturbs their functions, and the digestive powers are disordered from a new cause. — Frictions are also of much use, and not to be neglected. If every morning, we rub the whole body, perspiration is encouraged, and the circulation quickened; which indeed is so much accelerated by strong frictions continued for a long time, that in some degree they may supply the want of exercise. The ancients, who were sensible of all the advantages resulting from this practice, not only used it as a remedy, but also as a daily method of preserving health."† To speak from my own experience, I have used the flesh-brush to rub the whole body ever since the year 1737, and have stood to read and write ever since the year 1753; the former has contributed, by a divine blessing, to promote a constant

† Dr. *Tiffot* *ibid.* p. 65, 174.

constant activity and vigour; and the latter, to preserve me from repeated fits of the stone in the kidneys, with which I had been previously afflicted.

It is the great and usual mistake of persons under the disease of melancholy, to think that all their affliction is in their mind, and that medicines can do them no good. Whereas it is their indispensable duty and real interest, to commit themselves to the care of some skilful physician, and be all submission to his advice. "I have seen, says Mr. *Baxter*, "abundance cured by physick, and till the body "is cured, the mind will hardly ever be cured, "but will render all the clearest reasonings in "vain and to no purpose." § Next to the physician, it would be well for such afflicted persons to commit themselves to the judgment and direction of some experienced and faithful friend. Alas! one of the worst circumstances attending this disease, is to fancy themselves the best judges of their own case. Their language is commonly this, "you know not my case."—"But, says Mr. *Baxter*, I have seen scores in the same case; "whereas you never knew it in any but yourselves. "You plead—you feel not what I feel.—No "more does a physician feel what a man feels in "a fever, or any other sickness, and yet he far "better knows the disease than the patient does. "Therefore a wise man, when he is diseased, will "trust himself, under God, to the direction of his "physician, and the help of his friends about him, "and not refuse their help, because they advise "him contrary to his feelings." *

As

§ Ibid. p. 254.

* Ibid. p. 254.

As in this disease there is too much disinclination to company and business, therefore Mr. *Baxter* observes, " Such persons should avoid all unnecessary solitude, and be as much as possible in honest, chearful company. Solitude is the season for much thoughtfulness, for which you are at present very unfit. Some, by casting a little water in their own faces, or bidding others do it for them, have roused themselves from melancholy musings, as from sleep. Or you may get off your solitude, and set yourself about some business to divert you. Waste not one quarter of an hour in unprofitable musings. Be sure to keep yourself constantly employed, as far as your strength will bear, in the diligent labours of a lawful calling. God has commanded you to *labour six days, and in the sweat of your brows to eat your bread*, and has said, *he that will not labour, is unworthy to eat*. It is just with God, to make your sin itself your punishment, and your own idle thoughts to chastise you, when you will not get up, and go about your lawful business. I have known melancholy persons cured by setting themselves resolutely and diligently about their callings, and changing air and company, and riding abroad. If you will sit musing in a corner, and increase your own misery by idleness, rather than rouse up yourself, and apply to your business, your calamity is just. Say not, I have little or nothing to do. God has made it the duty of all, be they ever so rich, to labour in such employment as is suitable to their place and station. †

Where

† Ibid. p. 251, 255.

Where the disease puts on a more distressing appearance, Mr. *Baxter* then says, "Abhor suggestions to self murder, give them no room in your mind for a moment. Be not near a knife, a river, or any other instrument the devil would have you use in the execution. Tell all the case, whatever it is, to others, that they may help to your preservation. If there be any rooted cause in the mind, previous to the disease, it must carefully be looked to in the cure." †

The best directions addressed to the patients, under this disease, how they may attain a cure, are often in vain; especially when it has been of long continuance. But to their friends, directions may be very useful. Let such therefore exert their influence, that the expedients, now recommended, may be attended to with diligence and perseverance. In exerting such influence, there should be much wisdom and prudence, much pity and compassion. Consider *yourselves as in the body*, and liable to the very same awful distress. Remember that many who seemed to have no natural disposition to it, have nevertheless been overwhelmed with it, through some sudden and unexpected loss or disappointment. Teasing as your afflicted friends may be to you, by their often repeated complaints, and perhaps by their seemingly perverse opposition to what is most reasonable; yet by no means treat them with harsh speeches, tending to enrage, perplex, or fret them; this is only the way to increase their disease. On the contrary, though you cannot approve what they say, and are solicitous to have you believe

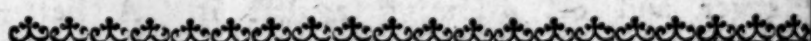
† Ibid. p. 751.

yet avoid charging them with fancy, imagination, or whim; for their disease is real, their misery is great, and a distempered fancy is often very tormenting. Instead of violent opposition to their fancy, rather try some ingenious way of directing it into a salutary channel. "Engage them in comforting others, that are in deeper distresses than themselves. Send them to some person that is in an error, which they are most against, to dispute it with him; that while they whet their wits to convince and confute another, it may turn their thoughts from their own distress. Forestus (a Dutch physician) tells us, that a melancholy patient of his, being a papist, was cured, when the reformation came into the country, by eager and oft disputing against it. A better cause may better do it. § The same physician had another melancholy patient, who thought himself dead; he therefore put a fellow in a coffin, like a dead man, by his bed-side, and made him rear himself a little, and eat. The melancholy man asked the counterfeit, whether dead men used to eat meat? He told him, yes; whereupon he did eat likewise, and was cured." * "It is well known, that some of the learaed have been cured of the hypochondriac disease, by a journey undertaken merely with a design of visiting some libraries at a distance." † Such instances show, that mildness and quietness, and not noise and clamour, will have the most salutary effects. It may also be prudent, not to mention in their hearing any calamitous

§ Baxter's sermon on melancholy, in the morning exercise. 1684.

Burton's anat. of melanch. ibid. p. 187. † Dr. Tiffot, ibid. p. 176.

mitous accidents, nor tell them any dismal stories, nor yet express before them an excessive mirth or gaiety; but gravity of deportment, and affability in conversation, will best suit them. Indeed talking with them should never be thought needless, and, according to the advice of a good writer on this subject, their friends should not only " converse with them with an innocent chearfulness, " but should talk fast." † Be sure to inform them of as many instances, as you can recollect, of those who felt all *their* anguish, and yet were restored to a state of continued health and chearfulness. As for assisting them by prayer and religious instruction, though always seasonable, yet it is more properly the subject of the *following chapters*.



C H A P. IV.

Why MELANCHOLY is sometimes called religious.

IT appears by the preceding *chapters*, that this disease first affects the body, and afterwards the mind, by filling the thoughts with continual gloom, and sometimes horror. This uneasiness of mind will discover itself, by thinking and talking on some particular subject, with which such persons distress themselves, and from which they cannot be diverted. If their subject of uneasiness be any thing relating only to the present life and world, it is called in general, *melancholy*. But if religion, the soul, and eternity be the subjects of uneasiness, it is called, *religious melancholy*. Under this name

† *Blakeway on religious melancholy*, p. 122.

are included *three* sorts of persons; such whose attention to religion began and ended with their melancholy; or such whose serious piety was the happy fruit of it, and began while they were under this disease; or such who were truly pious before they had any appearance of this disease. It would be easy to produce instances of each. Perhaps the two former may seem more easily to be accounted for than the latter; as any great affliction, especially when it lies with weight upon the animal spirits, tends to reduce the most trifling minds to serious consideration, and attention to things of everlasting concern. But persons of true piety are as liable to every kind of affliction as other men, nor is it more to be wondered at, that such should have this disease, than a fever or jaundice, a fit of the stone, or gout. *Heman* and *Asaph* were inspired writers, and persons of distinguished excellency for the capacities of their minds and their devotedness to God; yet both of them appear to have been exercised with this disorder. *Asaph* says, among other distressing apprehensions of his own case, *Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* If possible, *Heman* expresses himself in yet more painful terms, *While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.* The apostle therefore had very good reason for suggesting to the afflicted people of God this quieting, though obvious thought, *There hat. no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.*

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Were we to charge religion itself as gloomy in its nature and tendency, and therefore to give it the name of melancholy, this would be a most unjust reproach. "A melancholy temper and disposition is not from religion, but from our nature and constitution; and therefore religion ought not to be charged with it."§ Religion forbids not the regular gratification of any of our appetites and inclinations. It assures us of the wisdom and goodness of God in creating so many beautiful and pleasing objects, and implanting in us such strong desires towards them. It authorizes the use, and only designs to prevent the abuse, of all the creatures of God. It refines our relish for, and enhances our pleasure in, the enjoyment of them. It condemns a morose, peevish, and discontented temper of mind, and affords the best assistance, by suggesting the most powerful motives, to habitual cheerfulness. It lays a foundation for self-possession and self-enjoyment, in *having peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and good hope through grace of happiness to all eternity*. It even excites us, as equally a matter of duty and privilege, to *be anxiously careful for nothing, to give thanks in every thing, to glory in tribulations also, to rejoice in the Lord, and even to rejoice evermore*.

Indeed the first transition from an irreligious, to a religious, temper and character, may seem to wear the appearance of gloomy. But there are innumerable instances of serious thoughtfulness about the soul and eternity, even in the first stages of it, where there is not the least trace of what is pro-

§ Archb. Tillotson, fol. vol. I, p. 109.

erly called, religious melancholy. When any *pro-*
ligal comes to himself; that is, to his right mind,
he changes riot and dissipation, for temperance;
wild inconsideration, for prudent reflection; un-
bridled lusts, for pious resolutions, sincere repen-
tance, and thorough reformation. This is not
his disease, but his health; not his want of self-
enjoyment, but his recovery of it; not religious
melancholy, but religious excellency and happiness.
Some will no doubt *think it strange that he runs not*
with them to the same excess of riot, as he formerly
did, and will *speak evil of him*, as if he was be-
come mad or mopish. But are they not the very
same sort of persons, whose gross defect in know-
ledge and sympathy leads them to laugh at this
real disease, as if it was nothing but imagination
and vapours? The skilful physician, and every
prudent observer, will allow, that the mind may
be full of serious consideration, when the body is
perfectly free from disease. Or, in other words,
that there may be a sound mind in a sound body;
as is eminently the case, when a person becomes
truly religious, and at the same time is free from
this disease. “After conversing with multitudes
of melancholy persons, says Mr. *Baxter*, I have
met with many that have been distracted by
worldly cares, or sorrows, or disappointments,
for one that was distracted about the matters
of salvation. And why should religion be de-
spised for any single instance of the latter? On
the whole, I had a thousand times rather go to
Bedlam, through excessive care about my salva-
tion, than cast away the care of my soul, for fear
“ of

“ of being distracted, and numbered amongst the
 “ worst of Bedlams in hell. God will no more
 “ condemn any, merely for being distracted, than
 “ an idiot, for want of using reason. To have
 “ reason for the world, but none for knowing
 “ loving, and serving God, is the worst kind of
 “ madness.”* He also says, “ Those are not melan-
 “ choly, who are rationally sorrowful for sin, and
 “ sensible of their misery, and solicitous about their
 “ recovery and salvation, though it be with a
 “ great seriousness as the faculties can bear. Their
 “ reason is sound, and their imagination, fancy
 “ and thinking faculties are not crazy or dis-
 “ eased.” †

On the contrary, “ There is a state, most me-
 “ lancholy, and truly pitiable; and that is of
 “ those, who neither by the immediate appoint-
 “ ment of providence, as in the case of *Job*; nor
 “ by the proper effect of their own wickedness, as
 “ in the case of an evil conscience; but by their
 “ own imagination and groundless fears, by indis-
 “ position of body and disorder of mind, by false
 “ notions of God and of themselves, are made
 “ very miserable in their own minds. They fancy
 “ though without sufficient reason, that *the arrows*
 “ *of the Almighty are within them, the poison whereof*
 “ *drinketh up their spirits; and that the terrors of*
 “ *God set themselves in array against them.* This
 “ is indeed a case, which deserves the highest pite-
 “ and compassion, and ought to be treated with
 “ the utmost tenderness.” ‡

* Baxter's practical works, vol. ii. p. 630. † Ibid vol. i. p. 24

‡ Dr. Clarke's sermon of religious melanch. vol. x. 8vo. p. 315, 316

CHAP V.

The SYMPTOMS of religious MELANCHOLY.

WHAT has been already said (*chap. 1.*) concerning its symptoms as a mere bodily disease, should be considered as the foundation of what is now to be said of it, when it takes a religious turn. The latter would have no existence without the former; which is a circumstance that such persons need to be often reminded of. And when the symptoms of the former are duly attended to, those of the latter will much less excite our wonder and surprise; but will rather be considered as what we may naturally expect, though greatly to be pitied. Here also, “The principal sign, by which we may judge when the indisposition is chiefly or wholly in the body, is this; that the person accuses himself highly *in general*, without being able to give any instance *in particular*; that he is very apprehensive, of he does not well know what; and fearful, yet can give no reason why.” To which must now be added, “That he thinks very ill of himself, and yet has been guilty of no great faults; and fears that God also will condemn him, and yet is not sensible by what presumptuous transgression he has merited such displeasure.” § On the other hand, when he is

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§ Dr. Clarke, *ibid.* p. 319.

26 *The SYMPTOMS of religious MELANCHOLY.* Ch.

able to account for his sense of guilt, either by his past general sinfulness, or by some particular heinous transgression, yet, though he hath been truly humbled and penitent on that account, he remains unreasonably deaf to the mercies of God, the merits of Christ, the promises of the gospel, and the relief which multitudes of sinners have derived from thence, as if all these boundless sources of consolation were mere fables.

It must be carefully observed, that this, which is the principal symptom, may be traced, in some degree, through the different stages or appearances of the disease; viz. of *dejection*, *distress*, and *despair*. — Under *dejection* or great depression of spirit, though the disease may put on its milder form, yet the mind groans under the pressure, which is really the more burthensome, because it is usual of long continuance. A person, in this case, is apt to be very scrupulous, afraid of committing sin in every thought, word, or look, by whatever he eats, drinks, or wears, by travelling, or by staying at home. He is perhaps as prone to superstition as to make laws for himself, which God never made, or to ensnare himself with needless vows and resolutions, and hurtful austerities; falsely imagining that true religion consists much in imposing tasks upon himself, either in spending so many hours in devotion, or in wearing a particular dress, or using a particular diet. His fancy is so exceedingly envious in aggravating his sinfulness, that every common infirmity is with him an heinous crime. He is especially quick in applying to himself the threatenings of the word of God, but is as much disposed

overlook the promises, as if they were not delivered by the same authority, or were not designed to be of the same extent. — If his disease grows up to *distress* of mind, he then places religion principally in sorrow, and perhaps in painfully depriving the body its necessary refreshments. Whatever he does, or reads, or hears, he is still turning into fresh matter for self-accusation and self-condemnation. He loses his fitness for meditation and prayer, chiefly by his terrors concerning his eternal state; as he dare not hope, therefore he dare not pray; and he is in such dread of going to the Lord's-Supper, that if he partakes of it, he is apt to conclude that he has eaten and drunk his own damnation. — At length the same person may, perhaps, be seen in the horrors of *despair*; concluding that his day of grace is past, and that it is too late for him to repent and find mercy; rashly pronouncing himself to be rejected of God, and therefore past all hope and help from any of the means of grace. Thus he grows utterly averse to the public or private exercises of religion, thinks himself a determined hater of God and of godliness, and charges that to himself as his sin and guilt, which is the mere effect of his bodily disease. His mind, in this dreadful situation seems, to himself, to be filled with blasphemous thoughts, or to have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

It is a most awful dispensation of divine providence, when such symptoms of dejection, and distress, and even of despair, have attended persons, whose piety and usefulness have made them the greatest blessings in their day. Here are pains and

sorrows that seem almost peculiar to the damned in hell. Here are thoughts of God himself, which fill the soul with inconceivable horror. Here the objects of faith, which tend to elevate, dignify and delight the mind, are so many sources of perplexity and vexation. *Heman* could experimentally say, *My soul is full of troubles. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with thy waves. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off.* But without such awful experience, we may argue with *Solomon*, *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* The mind in this case filled with such terrible apprehensions, that it is impossible for all created enjoyments to lighten the burthen, and banish his sense of woe. He sees others enjoy the comforts of life, the delights of friendship, the blessings of religion; but he himself can take comfort in nothing, visible or invisible, either in the creature or the Creator, in time or eternity. He is every moment wasting his spirits, in ruminating on his own helpless and hopeless miseries. The most acute pains of the body are light and inconsiderable, compared with the tortures of his mind. His intellectual powers feel such agony, as even puts his whole animal nature on the rack; while every pore of the body, perhaps, is often profusely sweating, merely, with the pressure of the mind. And "if, where there is no real ground for trouble of spirit, yet the mere phantom of a deluded imagination can be so terrible as men sometimes find it; what then

6. *The CAUSES of religious MELANCHOLY.* 29

the reality of God's insupportable wrath, lying upon the mind of an impenitent and despairing sinner! Therefore take heed of real and habitual wickedness." *

C H A P. VI.

The CAUSES of religious MELANCHOLY.

IN order to account for this deplorable state of the human mind, nothing can afford us such satisfaction as that of *Heman, Lord while I suffer terrors*. He ascribes his terrors to divine operation. He well knew, that the Father of his spirit had immediate access to all its powers, and absolute dominion over them. *When God, says he, gives quietness, who then can make trouble? when he hides his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man*. The God who kindled the lamp of reason, in a moment, either totally, or partially, extinguish it. The God who set reason on its throne, reign over all the inferior powers of nature, can disturb its empire, take its sceptre out of its hand, bind it with fetters, fright it with terrors, or pierce it through with sorrows. *Jeremiah* saw, that there was no calamity comparable to that of having God be a terror to the mind, He therefore pronounced this judgment on impious *Pashur, The*

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* *Dr. Clarke, ibid. p. 336.*

Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magbissabib; for thus saith the Lord, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends. And when Jeremiah saw the calamities coming on his country, in which he himself was so largely to share, he cried to the Lord, Be not a terror to me. Thou art my hope in the day of evil. Then he considered terror from God himself more immediately, as inconceivably greater than all other troubles. And indeed every one that seriously attends to the unhappy circumstances of persons under the influence of this apprehension, must acknowledge, that it is the work of the Lord, and the operation of his hand.

“ There is not, says Mr. Addison, a sight
 “ nature so mortifying as that of a (melancholy
 “ person, when his imagination is troubled, and
 “ whole soul disordered and confused. *Babylon*
 “ ruins is not so mournful a spectacle. What
 “ infinite advantage does this faculty give an
 “ mighty Being over the soul of man? And how
 “ great a measure of happiness or misery are
 “ capable of receiving from the imagination only
 “ God knows all the ways of affecting the im
 “ gination. He can infuse what ideas he pleases
 “ and fill those ideas with terror or delight,
 “ what degree he thinks fit. He can excite ima
 “ gination in the mind, without the help of words,
 “ make scenes arise before us, and seem present
 “ to the eye, without the assistance of bodies,
 “ exterior objects. He can transport the imagi
 “ nation with such beautiful and glorious visions
 “ as cannot possibly enter into our present concep
 “ tions

tions; or haunt it with such ghastly spectres and apparitions, as would make us hope for annihilation, and think existence no better than a curse. In short, he can so exquisitely ravish or torture the soul through this single faculty, as might suffice to make up the whole heaven or hell of any finite being."†

When we descend to the particular causes of religious melancholy, it is necessary to recollect what has been said, *chap. ii*; since the causes of the mere bodily disease have their concurrent influence with those, which we are now more especially to mention. "It is very difficult, in a matter wherein there is so great variety, to enumerate the several cases that may happen; and yet, without distinguishing them, in some measure, under their proper heads, general directions can be but of small use, and of very uncertain application in practice. The principal instances therefore that most usually occur, and the chief occasions of such melancholy apprehensions, (next to) a mere indisposition or distemper of body, are such as follow, — a complaint of want of improvement under the exercise of religious duties, and want of a fervent love towards God; — an apprehension of being excluded from mercy, by some positive decree and fore-appointment of God; — a fear of having committed the sin against the Holy Ghost; — an uneasiness arising from wicked and blasphemous thoughts; — and a terror arising from the consciousness of past sins, and from

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† *Spec.* vol. vi. No. 421.

“the want of assurance of their being certainly
“pardoned.” †

Some sudden or long continued affliction, may greatly contribute to this disease. By the suddenness of any calamity, the powers of body and mind are very liable to be broken, and such deep impressions to be made, as to render the sufferer unfit for every sphere of action or enjoyment; fill the thoughts with perpetual confusion; and especially with distressing apprehensions of God and providence, of the soul and eternity. The same unhappy effects may also proceed from a state of long affliction, when there seems to be no prospect of relief, and every thing appears gloomy, whether past, present, or to come.

The disease may, in a great measure, be both occasioned and aggravated by mistaken apprehensions concerning other religious truths, besides those of divine decrees, and the sin against the Holy Ghost. As for instance;—a want of sufficient attention to the love of God in Christ towards sinful men, that even the chief of sinners may be saved;—falsely conceiving of the covenant of grace, as if the blessed God therein treated with innocent creatures, rather than with the guilty; or as if Christ, the Mediator of the covenant, was not equally willing and able to accomplish salvation for all that come unto him;—especially, in making faith in Christ for salvation to consist in believing ourselves to be forgiven, and that we are assured of our own happy state for eternity; whereas it rather consists in believing Christ to be the Sa-

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† Dr. Clarke, *ibid.* p. 316, 317.

viour of sinners, and in desiring to be saved by him, so as to trust in him alone for salvation, and be subject to him in all holy obedience.

In other cases, this disease may be much owing to some particular sin, which has been committed more directly against the dictates of an enlightened conscience. Undoubtedly a deep sense of sin and guilt may be an insupportable burthen to the mind, and often really is so, even while it may be intirely free from the influence of bodily disease. But what must the burthen be, where sin and guilt are inconceivably aggravated by a prevailing melancholy? Are the cholerick more easily tempted to wrath and anger? the flegmatick, to sloth and indolence? the sanguine, to lust and wantonness? And is it not as reasonable to suppose, that melancholy persons will be powerfully tempted to blasphemy, infidelity, or despair; especially when their consciences have some particular sin to charge themselves with? It is no wonder, if, in such circumstances, they compare themselves with, or even conclude themselves superior in guilt to, the vilest characters which they have ever known, or heard, or read of. Perhaps they may sometimes read of persons, whose agonies of despair were partly owing to some particular sin, but chiefly to a predominant melancholy. And perhaps the writers of such accounts may have injudiciously taken no notice of the latter, but imputed the distress intirely to the former. Whatever the sin may have been, the gospel provides for its forgiveness, through repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But in vain is the gospel remedy

applied to a melancholy mind, till the disease itself is in some measure removed. If some writers of lives had made this necessary distinction, they would have prevented the mistakes of their readers, especially of such readers as are disposed to this disease. "The reading of *Spira's* case, (an Italian lawyer, who died about 1548) says Mr. *Baxter*, "causes or increases melancholy in many; the ignorant author having described a plain melancholy, as if it was the damnable despair of a sound understanding. Whereas that despair, which comes immediately from invincible melancholy, though occasioned first by sin, is no otherwise sinful or dangerous, than the despair or raving of a madman, or one in a doting fever." §

This disease may be sometimes not a little owing to mistakes concerning the exercise of religious duties. Persons may not duly proportion their reading and meditation, their fasting and prayer to their natural infirmities. By immoderate length, they may tire themselves, and oppress every power of body and mind, and thereby devotion may feed a disorder, which it has the happiest tendency to cure. "*Forestus* mentions a minister, who, through precise fasting in lent, and over-much meditation, contracted this distemper, and in the end became desperate; thought he saw devils in his chamber, and that he could not be fayed; he smelled nothing but fire and brimstone, was already in hell, and would ask them still, if they did not smell as much? I told him, he was melancholy; but he laughed me to scorn, and replied, "that

§ *Baxter's practical works*, vol. i. p. 248—282,

that he saw devils, talked with them in good earnest, would spit in my face, and ask me, if I did not smell brimstone. But at last he was cured.”* I have seen a woman, says Dr. *Tiffot*, who appeared very sensible till she was five and twenty; at which time of life she unfortunately attached herself to the *Moravians*, and was so possessed with the love of Jesus Christ, whom she called her lamb, that she could not admit any other idea; and without any other cause became an idiot in the space of a few months; in which state she had no other recollection than that of her friend. I saw her almost every day during six months, and could get no other answer to my questions than these words, “my sweet lamb;” these she repeated every half hour, with her eyes cast down. She lived six months in this condition, and then died of a marasmus, a slow continual fever.†

CHAP VII.

The CURE of religious MELANCHOLY.

IT was once the language of a king of *Israel*, *Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that I should recover a man of his leprosy?* So should every sincere christian say, with respect to the curing

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* *Burton's anatomy of melancholy.* *ibid.* p. 419.

† Dr. *Tiffot*, *ibid.* p. 34, 35.

ing persons of religious melancholy. They that have conversed most with such cases, and have seen their awful appearances, and heard their manner of evading every argument that could be suggested for their relief; have had full conviction, that their cure is a divine work, without which all human help is utterly in vain. Whatever therefore is attempted by physicians or divines, in behalf of such pitiable objects, should be undertaken intirely in a humble dependance on the divine blessing, looking to that gracious and compassionate Redeemer, who in prophecy is represented as saying, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; and who, while on earth, with efficacy said to the distressed both in body and mind, Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

That a cure is needed for the body, I hope, has been made sufficiently plain, by what has already been observed concerning the symptoms and causes of this, as a bodily disease. And much more does the cure appear to be necessary for the mind, by what is said of the symptoms and causes of religious melancholy. Yet it is too common to be all attention, either to the body, in the neglect of the mind; or to the mind, in neglect of the body. "If a man, that is troubled in conscience, come to a minister (said the Rev. Mr. Greenham) it may be, he will look all to the soul, and nothing to the body. If he come to a physician, he considers the body, and neglects the soul. For

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“ my part, I would never have the physician’s
 “ counsel despised, nor the labour of the minister
 “ neglected. Because the soul and body dwell to-
 “ gether, it is convenient, that as the soul should
 “ be cured, by the word, by prayer, by fasting,
 “ or by comforting; so the body must be brought
 “ into some temperature, by physick, and diet,
 “ by harmless diversions, and such like ways. Pro-
 “ vided always, that it be so done in the fear of
 “ God, as not to think by these ordinary means
 “ to smother or evade our troubles, but to use
 “ them as preparatives, whereby our souls may
 “ be made more capable of the spiritual methods
 “ that are to follow afterwards.” † Mr. *Green-*
ham died 1591, and was the most eminent divine
 in that age for administering advice and consolation
 to persons afflicted with religious melancholy. Dr.
Clarke to the same purpose observes, “ The first
 “ and the most usual cause, which is sometimes
 “ the only and entire occasion of it; and which
 “ almost always accompanies and increases it, when
 “ it arises from any other causes; is indisposition
 “ or distemper of body. And this, though it is
 “ not properly and immediately of religious con-
 “ sideration, yet it is by no means to be neglected,
 “ slighted, or despised. For as the mind operates
 “ continually upon the body, so the body likewise,
 “ whilst they continue united, will of necessity in-
 “ fluence and operate upon the mind. And it is
 “ not unusual, to see the good understanding, even
 “ of a reasonable person, borne down and over-
 “ burthened by bodily disorder. This therefore is
 “ a matter,

† *Greenham’s comfort for afflicted consciences*, p. 137.

“ a matter, which must by no means be made light
 “ of; but advice must be given suitable to the
 “ case, and proper remedies applied to the distem-
 “ per. The chief difficulty in such cases generally
 “ is, to persuade the person, that *that* trouble,
 “ which he conceives to be in his mind, is more
 “ truly and properly an indisposition of body. But
 “ he may most likely be prevailed upon to seek for
 “ proper assistance in that respect, by considering
 “ that even where there is real ground for trouble
 “ of mind, yet *that* being usually augmented by
 “ concurrent disorder of body, application of suit-
 “ able remedies may with best success be at the
 “ same time made for both. And it is not easy
 “ to imagine, how upon remedying one, even sen-
 “ sible persons have, beyond what they could pos-
 “ sibly have expected, found themselves relieved in
 “ the other. The trouble, (in the mind) though
 “ without sufficient cause, may be very great; and
 “ the misery real, though without good foundation;
 “ and therefore it deserves the greater pity and
 “ compassion, and is not to be let alone to in-
 “ crease by neglect; but all endeavours ought to
 “ be used to remove the bodily indisposition; and
 “ the person at the same time persuaded as much
 “ as possible, that all disturbance of mind, not
 “ arising from any particular, distinct, known oc-
 “ casion, is chiefly owing to such indisposition, and
 “ will be removed together with it.” §

In considering *why this disorder is sometimes called
 religious (chap. iv.)* notice was taken of three sorts
 of persons, whose cases are included under it; viz.
 Such

Such whose attention to religion began and ended with their melancholy; or those whose serious piety was the happy fruit of it, and began with it; or those who were truly pious before they had any appearance of this disease. The difference between the *first* and *second* of these has often distinctly appeared, when the disease itself has been cured; but while it remains, no such difference can be discerned. For this obvious reason, it becomes necessary to consider the persons, actually under this disease, as only consisting of, those who never attended to religion before this affliction, and those who were previously possessed of serious piety. This single difference is of great importance to observe, as these *two* sorts of persons, though under the same disease, will require very different treatment in order to a cure.

SECTION I.

Means to promote their relief, who never before seriously attended to religion.

The *first* sort of persons under religious melancholy, will appear to a skilful observer, as having something pleasing and encouraging, blended with what is painful and distressing. Amidst all the shocking symptoms of the bodily disease, and all the apparent horrors of the mind, it affords some pleasing hope, to see the thoughtless, full of consideration; the trifling, become serious; religion, so long neglected or but little regarded, now the subject of earnest enquiry; the salvation of the soul, never before or very slightly attended to,
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now treated as the *one thing needful*; and to hear a language uttered, and often repeated, by those lips which, till now, had ever been employed for very different purposes. Perhaps we hear them often saying, "I am the vilest of sinners. There is no hope for me. I am lost, I am undone. I shall never obtain mercy. God will cast me into hell. I am already like the damned, &c. &c." He that wisely attends to such a case as this, will endeavour more especially to assist the patient; partly, in forming a right judgment of the design of providence in this affliction; and partly, in directing to the best means for answering that design.

First, The design of providence, it will be suggested, is wise and righteous, good and gracious. *God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy; he will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever. By this severe affliction shall iniquity be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away sin.*

Secondly, That the design of providence, gracious and merciful as it is, may be happily answered, it is necessary, to be *humbled under the mighty hand of God*, in a penitent sense of past forgetfulness of him, and disobedience to him. It is necessary, to *confess sin and forsake it*. Not only should sin be acknowledged in general, but there should be a conviction of particular sins; and therefore we should compare ourselves with the perfect law of God, which requires holiness in heart and life, in thought, word and deed, without failing in one point. If

we see, that we have not loved God with all our heart, nor our neighbour as ourselves: If we have obtained *by the law the knowledge of sin*, so as to despair of having the law to justify us in the sight of God: If we hate sin, because God hates it: If we earnestly desire to have repentance towards God, and beg for the Holy Spirit to enable us to repent: If we desire as much to be delivered from the reigning power, as from the condemnation of sin: If the tidings of salvation by Christ are glad tidings to our souls: If we desire salvation by Christ, more than health, or any enjoyment upon earth: If these be our convictions and desires, it is a good sign that divine grace hath changed our hearts, and may encourage us to hope for pardon and acceptance, for deliverance from sin and sorrow, and for everlasting life and happiness with God and Christ, with holy angels and perfected saints. As a farther confirmation of such comfortable truths, the patient may be assured, *That the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanses us from all sin.* That *though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* To which may be added the word of exhortation, *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

It is not to be expected, that a person, who is once or twice addressed in this manner, will soon discover all the desirable effects of it. But it will be necessary to repeat these things, not only for days, but weeks and months, and sometimes urge
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one part of these sentiments, and sometimes another, and be as frequently answering the many objections, which the afflicted person will urge against every part, and even repeat such answers again and again. Only it is much to be wished, that every interview should be concluded with prayer. And nothing should be dropped in conversation or prayer, but what is expressive of the greatest kindness and tenderness for the sufferer's support under trouble and deliverance out of it.

It is observed of the Rev. Mr. *Dod*, (who died 1645, and who was sent for to many persons in such circumstances) that his endeavours were attended with so much the greater success to such persons, and that he was esteemed the more peculiarly fit to converse with them, because of his mild, meek, and merciful disposition. "He was particularly sent for to a gentlewoman of fortune, who, under her distress of mind, was often tempted to make away with herself. But Mr. *Dod*'s counsels, exhortations, and prayers were so blessed, that she not only recovered out of her anguish of spirit, but was afterwards taken notice of for eminent piety, her affliction proving the means of her conversion." *

There was a similar case of a farmer, who had lost a child by some awful accident, and from that time fell into such deep melancholy, that he sat in his house two years, unable to attend the most necessary business of his farm. He was frequently visited by two or three judicious and experienced christians, whose conversation and prayers, through a divine

* *Clark's life of the Rev. Mr. Dod.*

a divine blessing, gradually brought him into an acquaintance with the design of providence in his afflictions, and with the best manner of answering that design. I happened to be in that neighbourhood, 1738, when I was informed of his case, and was desired to visit him. I found every thing in his appearance that excited horror. There then seemed no more likelihood of his deliverance out of his long bondage, then there had been for two years before. At the close of my visit, such cheerfulness appeared in his countenance, that I was led to ask him, "If I should come hither again next Sunday-morning, will you be ready to go with me to your parish-church?" The question surprised him, and, as it pleased God, immediately drew from him a promise, that he would be ready. I considered such a promise of a person in his circumstances, not only as a favourable symptom, but as a thing much to be depended upon. Accordingly I was with him, at the appointed time, and found him dressed for church, whither he went with me, and where his presence was the admiration of all the worshippers, and afterwards of the whole parish. From that time he was enabled to return to the business of his farm, and to all the duties and comforts of his place and station; and what was still better, he ever after appeared to be a person of serious piety.

If religious melancholy should, in other instances, be only exchanged for health and cheerfulness, and the concern about religion intirely end with the distemper, though that is a circumstance greatly to be regretted, yet it is not much to be wondered

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at. Alas! how often are the pious resolutions and promises of sickness forgotten or neglected, when health is restored? *It is happened unto them, according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*

SECTION II.

Proper measures to be taken with those, who were religious before their melancholy.

The second sort of persons under religious melancholy, are not so easily dealt with. Having been long acquainted with religious subjects, and their minds filled with a rich variety of ideas derived from scripture, from christian experience, and from books of divinity, the disease has more plentiful materials to work upon, in order to cast itself into the most complex and distressing form. There is no conversing with them on any regular plan, their ideas are so various, their transition is so quick from one subject to another, and every subject they touch upon is made, in such surprising ways, subservient to their prevailing dejection of spirits, or yet more painful anguish of mind.

“ They, who are under the power of melancholy,
 “ says Archb. Tillotson, are seldom fit to take that
 “ counsel, which alone is fit to be given them,
 “ and *that* is, not to believe themselves concern-
 “ ing *themselves*, but to trust the judgment of
 “ others rather than their own apprehensions. In
 “ other cases every man knows himself best, but
 “ a melancholy man is most in the dark as to
 “ himself.

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“ himself. The cause of his trouble and doubt-
 “ ing is very much to be pitied, but hard to be
 “ removed, unless by physick, or by time, or by
 “ chance. One may happen to say something, that
 “ may hit the humour of a melancholy man, and
 “ satisfy him for the present; but reason must
 “ needs signify very little to those persons, the
 “ nature of whose distemper it is, to turn every
 “ thing, that can be said for their comfort, into
 “ objections against themselves.” † “ Melancholy
 “ persons make mountains of mole-hills, says Dr.
 “ Horton, they enlarge evils to themselves, and
 “ commonly make them worse than indeed they
 “ are, and this causes dejection. It is in this case
 “ with the eye of the soul, as with the eye of the
 “ body. Those, who look through painted glass,
 “ every thing appears to them of the colour of
 “ the glass, which they look through. Even so it
 “ is also in the speculations of the mind. Those,
 “ who look through a sad and dark fancy, every
 “ thing appears sad and dark unto them, and they
 “ have uncomfortable apprehensions about it.” ‡

If, however, we wish to be instrumental in the
 hand of God, to promote, in any measure, the
 recovery of such persons, our efforts may, perhaps,
 be not improperly reduced to the following rules.
 — Be affectionately concerned for their distressed
 state; — Endeavour to convince them, that it is a
 bodily disease, which affects their minds; — Correct
 their mistaken apprehensions concerning some reli-
 gious tenets; — Caution them against other things,
 which

† Archb. Tillotson, *ibid.* p. 133.

‡ Dr. Horton's *exposition of select psalms*, fol. p. 165.

which may increase and prolong their disease; — Be sure to inform them of persons recovered from as bad a state.

First, We should be affectionately concerned for the distressed state of those pious persons, who are afflicted with religious melancholy. *To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewed from his friends*, was Job's tender plea. Nor less tenderly does the Apostle urge us, to *Remember them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body*. While hope supports us under most of our afflictions and sorrows, does not *their hope*, of whom we are now speaking, seem to be quite *perished*? Does not the wrath of God seem, at least in their own apprehensions, to lie hard upon them? Are not *their prayers shut out*, as far as they themselves can discern? Are they not spectacles of horror, and as a wonder unto many?

See how that eminent divine, the Rev. Mr. *Tim. Rogers*, who had himself felt the anguish of this affliction, and drank deep of this bitter cup, describes his own feelings, so as to excite our tenderest pity for any other persons in similar circumstances. "In other cases, says he, when a
" man is distressed on earth, he can lift up his
" eyes to heaven, and see joy and comfort for
" him there. But in this woful case, there is
" neither the light of the sun, the moon, or the
" stars, for many days; the face of God is hid,
" and covered with a dreadful cloud. *Destruction*
" *from God was a terror to me, and because of his*
" *highness, I could not endure.* Alas! if God be
" mine enemy, as I apprehend him to be, who
" can be my friend? I have a dreadful sound
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“ of his displeasure in my ears, and who can
 “ bring me glad tidings? God never gives to
 “ his people such a bitter cup, but he mingles
 “ love and mercy with it; but alas! I taste no-
 “ thing but gall and wormwood, nothing but mi-
 “ fery and vexation. He is with his people, but
 “ he has forsaken me. He has cast me into a
 “ fiery furnace, where I am daily burnt and scorch-
 “ ed, and he is not with me there. I have often
 “ heard, that *it is a terrible thing to fall into the*
 “ *hands of the living God,* and I now find it to be
 “ so. All the wrath of men is nothing to his.
 “ One frown of his is more intolerable than all
 “ their rage and persecution. I dare not look up
 “ to heaven, for there I see how great a God I
 “ have against me. I dare not look into his word,
 “ for there I see all his threats, as so many barbed
 “ arrows to strike me to the heart. I dare not
 “ look into the grave, because thence I am like
 “ to have a doleful resurrection. As for the prayers
 “ of others, they can do me no good, unless I have
 “ faith, and I find I have none at all. I thought
 “ I had belonged to God, but now I find I am
 “ none of his. I thought I had been upright, but
 “ now I see I was mistaken. The storm is come,
 “ and that house, which I built upon the sand, is
 “ now washed away. Those that are Christ’s, he
 “ will enable to persevere unto the end; but I
 “ am fallen from grace. I thought that I had
 “ been planted in his vineyard, and brought forth
 “ fruit, but now I am cut down as a barren tree.
 “ O how greatly have I been deceived, that ima-
 “ gined myself to be an heir of heaven, and am
 “ now

“ now seized with the pangs of hell ! Christ,
 “ indeed, called to me, but I did not open to
 “ him, and now he calls no more. Though I
 “ have cried sometimes, *Have mercy on me, Thou*
 “ *Son of David*, he passes away, and does not re-
 “ gard my cries. What shall I do, when he
 “ returns in the clouds, when I am to stand at
 “ his bar, and to be punished as an unbeliever ?” §

If we see such a sight as this, if we hear such language, let our hearts melt with compassion. Very thankful that it is not yet our own case, and full of awful thoughts lest God should so afflict us, let all our converse and prayers with the afflicted demonstrate to them, that we make their case our own, feel for them, yearn over them, and are afflicted in all their affliction. We may then humbly hope to engage their attention, and not advise and argue, not pray and plead, altogether in vain.

Secondly, Let us endeavour to convince such pious persons, by the apparent symptoms of their case, that it is but a *bodily* distemper, which is the foundation of their religious melancholy. For this purpose set before them, and apply to them, so much of the sentiments under chap. i. and v. as may carry the fullest conviction. Though they will with great difficulty be persuaded to acknowledge this, nevertheless such conviction is of the highest importance, in order to their cure. They must then be obliged to own, that though they feel no sickness, yet their bodily disease is really, and very distressing in its effects, but that no effects of it whatever, which are involuntary, can be

be sinful. Such an acknowledgment as this, would be gaining a considerable advantage over the distemper. For it is as natural for a melancholy person to be perplexed and disquieted in mind, and abound with desponding, and sometimes with despairing, and even with blasphemous thoughts, as for a man in the delirium of a fever to talk idly. Those thoughts which are not loved and delighted in, cannot be sinful. It is no sin, to be tempted; for Christ himself was tempted. What these sufferers, therefore, imagine to be their guilt, is only their affliction. They ought not to judge of their case, by their present feelings. They feel themselves under the dominion of evil thoughts, but it is owing to the violence of their disease, and contrary to their inclination. "If, says Mr. *Burton*, the party affected "shall certainly know this malady to have proceeded from too much fasting, meditation, precise life, contemplation of God's judgments, reading some books, hearing rigid preachers, &c. If he "shall perceive that it began first from some great loss, grievous accident or disaster, seeing others in "like case, or any such terrible object; let him "speedily remove the cause by all opposite means, art and industry. Let him by all honest recreations, refresh and recreate his distressed soul. Let "him divert his thoughts, either by himself, or "other of his friends. Let him read no more "such tracts or subjects, hear no more such fearful tones, avoid such companions, and by all "means open himself, submit himself, to the advice of good physicians and divines, which is "hearing them speak, to whom *the Lord God hath*

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" given

"given the tongue of the learned, that they should
 "know how to speak a word in season to him that
 "is weary. Let him not be obstinate, head-strong,
 "peevish, wilful, self-conceited, as in this malady
 "they are; but give ear to good advice, be ruled,
 "and persuaded. And no doubt but such good
 "counsel may prove as prosperous to his soul, as
 "the angel was to *Peter*, that opened the iron gates,
 "loosed his bands, brought him out of prison, and
 "delivered him from bodily thralldom. They may
 "ease his afflicted mind, relieve his wounded soul,
 "and take him out of the jaws of hell itself.
 "Only take this for a conclusion, as thou tenderest
 "thine own welfare in this, and all other melan-
 "choly, thy good health of body and mind; ob-
 "serve this short precept, give not way to soli-
 "tude and idleness, *Be not solitary, be not idle.*"

Thirdly, When we have, in any measure, succeeded
 in convincing such persons of their disease, we may
 then hope to afford them the more effectual assist-
 ance in correcting their mistaken apprehensions con-
 cerning some religious tenets. Previous to their pre-
 sent affliction, in all probability, no such mistakes
 might have arisen in their minds. But it is the na-
 ture of this disease, to involve the mind in endless
 labyrinths, and create insuperable difficulties, where
 none were before in the least apprehended. As for
 instance; That the goodness of God is not equal
 to his power, or his justice;—That Christ is not
 willing to save sinners, as he is able;—That the
 gospel covenant is made with the perfectly innocent
 and holy, and not with the sincerely penitent and

* *Burton's Anat. of Melanch.* ibid. p. 434.

believing; — That the secret purposes of God are more to be regarded, than his revealed will; — That there can be no true saving faith, except we are fully assured of our own forgiveness, acceptance, and eternal salvation; &c. &c. Such mistakes as these, one would think, scarce need any other correction, than barely to state them in their proper light, and manifestly mischievous tendency. But obvious as their nature is, to persons of a sound mind, there is much laborious argument necessary to be made use of with such dejected persons; nor must we be unwilling to take much pains in arguing with them on these subjects, and in answering the same objections over and over again.

I once received, from a pious woman, a *letter* full of mistaken apprehensions concerning divine truths, which her prevailing melancholy led her to express very strongly. Part of my answer [dated Sept. 22, 1739] was as follows. “ Your *first* argument is to “ this effect, That God has rejected you, because “ the people of God have long prayed on your “ behalf, and yet you are not delivered. Or, to “ use your own words, you thought, when the “ people of God prayed so earnest and believing, “ their prayers were soon answered. To this I “ reply, that the promises of God’s hearing and “ answering his people’s prayers, do not confine “ him to that particular time or method of deli- “ verance, which they may think most convenient. “ If God gives his people faith and importunity in “ prayer, it is a good sign that he intends to an- “ swer their request. If his answer is delayed, it “ is not because he does not hear, or because he

“ will not answer, but because he will exercise the
 “ faith and patience of his people. This Christ teaches
 “ us in the *parable of the importunate widow*, and
 “ the *man that asked his neighbour to lend him some*
 “ *loaves at midnight*. For this very reason, we are
 “ commanded, *Always to pray and not to faint.*—
 “ You next observe, that there were some, whom
 “ Christ loved, and wept over, but he could not
 “ save, and that probably this may be your own
 “ case. I answer, that harsh as it seems to say,
 “ that Christ could not save this or that person;
 “ yet in this sense it is true, Christ cannot save
 “ any in their sins, because it was the grand design
 “ of his undertaking to save from sin. Now, if
 “ you should resolve, like the young man whom
 “ *Christ loved* for many amiable things that ap-
 “ peared in him, to keep your sins, it will not be
 “ strange, if you go *away sorrowful*, as he did.
 “ Or, if you were filled with such malice, as to
 “ do your utmost to *crucify the Son of God afresh*,
 “ he might as justly weep over you, as he did over
 “ *Jerusalem*, for *killing the prophets*, and for seeking
 “ to kill him. But since you profess yourself will-
 “ ing to be saved by Christ on his own terms, and
 “ to part with every thing for Christ, if you might
 “ but have him; be assured, that Christ will save
 “ you, for whoever thus *cometh to him*, *he will in*
 “ *no wise cast out.*—Another of your objections is
 “ taken from Christ’s declaring, That though *many*
 “ *are called*, but *few are chosen*. From whence you
 “ conclude, that if you were chosen, Christ would
 “ call you, and in a more effectual manner than
 “ he has ever yet done. Thus your melancholy
 “ mind

“ mind is led to a way of reasoning, in which it
 “ may most easily lose itself. As scripture directs
 “ us, to *make our calling and election sure*, therefore
 “ the enquiry ought to be, Am I called? rather
 “ than, Am I elected? As evidences that you are
 “ called, not only outwardly by the word of God,
 “ but effectually by his spirit and grace, I will ask
 “ you, Is not sin your greatest burthen? Is it not
 “ your complaint, that you *are dead in sin*? Is it
 “ not your sincere desire to have the word reach
 “ your heart, as well as your ear? Can a dead
 “ body feel itself dead? Is it not a sign of life,
 “ to desire to have the life of God in your soul?
 “ Is not the promise of *being filled*, made to such
 “ as *hunger and thirst after righteousness*? and the
 “ promise of *rest*, made to them *who labour and*
 “ *are heavy laden* under the weight and burthen
 “ of sin? Is it possible, that any soul should be
 “ willing to receive Christ, and he himself be un-
 “ willing? None but *the father of lies* could sug-
 “ gest to your mind so absurd, so impious a thought.
 “ Christ himself complained, *Ye will not come unto*
 “ *me, that ye might have life*. On the contrary,
 “ here is a soul strangely perverting the complaint,
 “ and in effect crying, Lord, I would come unto
 “ thee, but thou wilt not receive me.—As to the
 “ marks and characteristicks of a gracious soul,
 “ your *letter* says of them, They are poor, little,
 “ mean sayings, except you had the comfort of
 “ them; and that it is one thing to say, I would
 “ be the Lord’s, and another to say, I am. I ac-
 “ knowledge these things are different; but they
 “ differ only in this, that the one is the language

“ of faith, the other of assurance. But by confound-
 “ ing faith and assurance, you deprive yourself of
 “ that comfortable hope, which, without assurance,
 “ would render your state both safe and chearful.
 “ You say, you would believe. And what did the
 “ man in the gospel say more, when he requested,
 “ *Lord, help mine unbelief?* Such a desire to be-
 “ lieve, is faith itself, though mingled with unbe-
 “ lief. In like manner, the hardness of heart,
 “ which you complain of, discovers some degree of
 “ softness of heart. For, as he that sees no need
 “ of Christ, and of believing in him, will not de-
 “ sire to believe; so he that is dead in sin, and sees
 “ no need of spiritual life, will never, while he
 “ continues such, desire that softness of heart, which
 “ is the genuine effect of a new and divine life.”

A gentlewoman of fine accomplishments and emi-
 -nent piety, reading Mr. *Hervey's Theron and Aspasio*,
 soon after its publication, was particularly struck
 with *Aspasio's* incautiously objecting, [*Dialogue 16*]
 against “ proving our title to comfort, by genuine
 “ marks of conversion;” and then asking, “ Is
 “ not this somewhat like the placing the dome of
 “ a cathedral upon the stalk of a tulip?” This
 occasioned such dejection of mind, that for some
 weeks she lost her usual and habitual chearfulness.
 Surprised at this change, I was enquiring into the
 cause, which she freely but very sorrowfully com-
 municated. I told her, that scripture was full of
 such marks, and authorised us to use them for our
 comfort. Even the Apostle said, *Our rejoicing is this,*
the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and
godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the
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grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. I also added, that the ingenious and pious author's mistake originated in his defining faith, as consisting in assurance, instead of representing assurance as one of the fruits of faith. Indeed *Aspasio* does not strictly adhere to his own definition; for, in the same dialogue, he observes, "I do not affirm, that without a full assurance, there is no faith. But this I maintain, that wherever the latter exists, there will be a sincere pursuit of the former." These remarks, through a divine blessing, contributed to the restoration of her wonted cheerfulness. †

Persons in these afflicted circumstances, and under such mistaken apprehensions concerning some religious tenets, must be urged to trust in the mercies of God through Christ. But their darkness of mind is their grand objection against the duty of trusting in God; though it is so expressly said, *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* The most benighted minds should be intreated to consider, that though they are in darkness, God is not; that though he hides his face from them, he may still be *their God and Saviour*; and that it is his usual way to cause light to arise in darkness. Therefore they ought not rashly to conclude, that no comfort belongs to them. Though they are at present in darkness themselves, they should not condemn all their friends as blind.

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† See faith defined, *Grand Inquiry*, edit. 4. p. 49. also the *Appendix* p. 65—68.

Though they cannot discern their own title to comfort, yet their pious friends may be able to discern it. And though they cannot walk by sense, they ought not to resolve, that they will not walk by faith.

Fourthly, There will be found a very close connection, between our endeavours to correct the mistakes of the melancholy concerning some religious tenets, and the farther importance of cautioning them against other things which may increase and prolong their disease.

As for instance;—Watch and strive against worldly sorrow, for it is much safer to be distracted with cares for heaven, than for earth.

Let not even your devotional exercises be too intense, or of too long a continuance. Meditating on divine subjects, closet-prayer, or any other religious employment, especially in secret, should be short, in some measure resembling ejaculatory prayer. If the stomach be sickly, physicians will wish to promote digestion by eating little and often. As for hearing others pray, or converse on divine subjects, even dejected and distressed minds may admit of, and attend to it, with safety, with frequency, and with advantage, provided they are not disgusted and wearied.

Do not so much abound in the confessing and aggravating the sins you have committed, as to forget or omit being thankful for the innumerable mercies you have been receiving.

Do not cherish, but pray and strive against, desponding thoughts. They rob God of his glory. They give Satan an advantage over you. They un-

fit

fit you for loving God; they lead you to hate him, and fly from him, and to slight Christ, and undervalue the blessings of his gospel.

By no means expect a perfection of holiness, while you are upon earth. The law of God requires a perfect obedience; but never did any one obey it in perfection, except the *one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*. There will be in us the relicks of corrupt nature, too much earthly-mindedness, too much wandering of the heart from God, and *the flesh lusting against the Spirit*. These things are to be matter of complaint and humiliation, repentance and godly sorrow; but they should not discourage our faith and hope.

Give not up yourselves to uneasiness for want of the extraordinary witnessings of the Holy Spirit. It pleases God to feed very few of his children with such dainties.

Take heed of concluding yourselves the objects of God's everlasting displeasure, only because he is at present hiding himself. All the greatest terrors and agonies of melancholy persons are but, comparatively, for a moment; but the torments of finally impenitent sinners are to all eternity. To inforce this caution against such despairing thoughts, consider the following well-attested story of an eminently pious gentlewoman: "She doubted very often of her salvation. She made her case known to a worthy minister, who advised her, to take heed of enquiries farther than God's word. Still the temptation grew upon her, in so much, that having a glass in her hand, and the same minister sitting by her, she broke out into this lamenta-

“ ble language.—You have often told me, that I
 “ must seek no farther than God’s word. But I
 “ have been long without comfort, and can endure
 “ no longer. Therefore, if I must be saved, let
 “ this glass be kept from breaking; and so threw
 “ it against the wall. — Here might the Lord’s
 “ hand, for this tempting of his majesty, have left
 “ her to the everlasting woes of her distrustful heart;
 “ yet, in rich mercy, he satisfied her languishing
 “ soul. The glass rebounds again, and comes safe
 “ to the ground, which the minister having got
 “ into his hands, said, Oh, repent of this sin, bless
 “ God for his mercy, and never distrust his promise
 “ more, for you have his voice from heaven, telling
 “ you plainly of your state.—This was curiosity,
 “ and might have brought despair; yet it was the
 “ Lord’s mercy to remit the fault, and grant an
 “ extraordinary confirmation to her faith.” †

I will only mention one thing more, as matter
 of caution, and that is, not to be inconsolable,
 when you are afflicted with blasphemous thoughts,
 or with fears of having committed the unpardon-
 able sin. Concerning the former, Mr. *Greenham’s*
 advice was, “ Fear them not, but abhor them.”
 And concerning the latter, the same eminent divine
 used to tell the melancholy, “ If you desire not
 “ to have committed it, it is certain you have not.” ‡
 “ — I would comfort those, said *Luther*, that are
 “ tried in their faith and hope towards God, in
 “ this way; first, let them avoid solitariness, keep
 “ always

† *The Rev. Mr. Rob. Bolton’s instructions for right comforting
 afflicted consciences. p. 5, 6.*

‡ *Clarke’s life of the Rev. Mr. Greenham.*

“ always in good company, sing the *Psalms*, and
 “ converse upon the holy Scriptures. Secondly,
 “ though it be the most difficult point to work
 “ upon the mind, yet it is the most present reme-
 “ dy, if they can, through grace, persuade them-
 “ selves, that those grievous thoughts are not their
 “ own, but *Satan's*; and that, therefore, they should
 “ earnestly endeavour to turn the heart to other
 “ objects, and quit these evil suggestions: For to
 “ dwell upon them, or fight with them, or to aim
 “ to overcome them, or to wait for an end of
 “ them; is only to irritate and strengthen them,
 “ even to perdition, without relief.”* — The same
 advice is given by Dr. *Sam. Clarke* in the following
 remarkable passage. “ Now in reality, for this
 “ very reason, because they detest and abhor wick-
 “ ed and blasphemous thoughts, and are afraid of
 “ them, and cannot avoid them; for this very
 “ reason, so far are they from being great and
 “ crying sins, or tendencies towards the blasphemy
 “ against the Holy Ghost, that in reality they are
 “ not so much as any sin at all, but merely weak-
 “ nesses of imagination arising from infirmity of
 “ body; and, if they be of any moral considera-
 “ tion, they are on the contrary rather, by the
 “ uneasiness which they cause, certain signs of a
 “ tender conscience, and of a pious disposed mind.
 “ For profligate and profane persons, are not dis-
 “ turbed at such things as these. The proper re-
 “ medy, (next to the curing the bodily disorder)
 “ is, to consider the true nature of sin; that all
 “ sin lies in the will only; and consequently those

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“ thoughts

* *Middleton's Biographia Evangelica*, vol. i. p. 232.

“ thoughts only can be sinful thoughts, which are
 “ either designs or contrivances of wickedness, or
 “ at least which take some pleasure and delight
 “ in the imagination of it. But those which offer
 “ themselves involuntarily to the imagination, not
 “ only without any delight, but with abhorrence
 “ and detestation; can no more be any sin in the
 “ person whom they disturb, than one man’s ac-
 “ cidentally seeing another’s wickedness, or hear-
 “ ing his blasphemy, can be sin in the person that
 “ hears, or sees it. God himself sees and hears
 “ all the wickedness that is done in the world;
 “ and yet it diminishes nothing from his infinite
 “ purity. And could melancholy pious persons
 “ once persuade themselves, that thoughts, which
 “ they do not chuse, are (in the moral sense) not
 “ their own, and that they are to be slighted and
 “ neglected accordingly; this in all probability
 “ would soon effectually cure them, and prevent
 “ their return; for the same reason, as too much
 “ fear and dread of them, naturally causes them
 “ to be almost always present.” †

Fifthly, If, on the whole, we are so happy as to
 find, that melancholy pious persons are persuaded
 of our affection for them, and concern for their best
 interest; if they listen to us, while we open the
 nature of their disease, and endeavour to correct
 their mistaken apprehensions concerning some reli-
 gious tenets; if they even admit our cautions against
 other things, which may increase and prolong their
 disease; we should then not fail to inform them of
 persons recovered from a state as bad as their own,

in

† Dr. Clarke, *ibid*, p. 332, 333.

Sect. 2. *The CURE of religious MELANCHOLY.* 61

in order to encourage and revive their hopes. And among the following instances, it may please God to render one or other of them more especially suitable and effectual.

Mr. *John Glover*, a gentleman of eminent piety, was personally known to Mr. *Fox*, the martyrologist, whose account of him was this. That when he saw and conversed with him, he was greatly emaciated, through the anguish of his mind for the space of five years, during which time he both ate and slept very little. That there was no probability of his surviving such heavy afflictions, if the Lord had not graciously visited him, now and then, with some seasonable consolations. But, at the close of that awful period, he was mercifully restored to health and comfort. His following life was so exemplary for a holy and heavenly conversation, and a zealous attachment to the reformed religion, that in the bloody reign of Queen *Mary* he was eagerly sought after, but very providentially escaped the hands of his persecutors.

Mr. *Robert Glover*, in the same persecuting reign, was seized by the officers, that were in search for his brother *John*. During his imprisonment, he was all joy and thankfulness to God, notwithstanding the most cruel treatment he received from his enemies. Yet, for a few days before he was to be burned, he was very much sunk in his mind, and destitute of all spiritual comfort; so that he felt in himself an utter indisposition to bear the cross of martyrdom. He was even ready to conclude, that every token of divine favour was banished from him. His pious minister endeavoured to comfort

fort him, but all in vain. He himself continued in prayer through the whole night before his suffering, but without relief to his sorrows, or one beam of light to his benighted soul. But when he came within sight of the stake, he was suddenly filled with divine comforts and heavenly joys; so that clapping his hands, he cried out to a companion in tribulation, "He is come! He is come!" meaning that the Divine Comforter was come to his soul, which produced, amidst his sufferings, all the appearance of perfect deliverance.

Nicolaus Laurentius, an Italian physician, gives the following account of a gentlewoman, who was eminent for wisdom and piety, but was long afflicted with deep melancholy. She often attempted to destroy herself, and at last, putting off her clothes, threw herself from a high promontory into the sea. It pleased God, that she received no hurt by her fall, and for two hours was remarkably preserved amidst the waves, though labouring all that time to drown herself. Notwithstanding her great deliverance, she continued almost a year after in distress of mind. But one day she listened, though at first with the utmost reluctance, to her husband, while he was reading the 57th of *Isaiah*, and especially verses 15, 16, and was enabled to reason thus with herself. "God here promises, *to revive*
 " *and comfort the heart of the contrite, and the spi-*
 " *rit of the humble, and that he will not contend*
 " *for ever, neither will be always wroth.* But I
 " have a very contrite heart, and a spirit humbled
 " even to the dust, out of a sense of my sins, and
 " divine vengeance against them. Perhaps God

" will

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 † Alex
 rentio, p
 &c. p. 3
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"will vouchsafe to revive and comfort my heart
 "and spirit, and not contend with me for ever,
 "nor be wroth against me still." Upon this she
 gradually obtained peace and comfort, and continu-
 ed to enjoy it many years after, to a good old age,
 and died triumphantly, 1595. †

Another gentlewoman (for there is no evidence
 of its being the same person with the last men-
 tioned) being much troubled in mind, and cast down
 in her soul with the apprehensions of spiritual de-
 sertion; her husband, with the assistance of others
 better experienced in such cases than himself, did
 all he could, by prayers to God, and also by per-
 suasions, to reduce her to the knowledge of God's
 mercy and goodness to her; but all in vain. She
 could not be drawn to hear, or read, any thing
 that might work for her spiritual advantage. At
 last, her husband, by much importunity, prevailed
 that he might read but one chapter in the bible to
 her; it was *Isaiah* 57; and when he came to the
 15th verse, "Oh, says she, is it so, that God
 "dwells with a contrite and humble spirit? Then
 "I am sure, that he dwells with me; for my heart
 "is broken into a thousand pieces. O happy text!
 "O happy time, that ever I should hear such com-
 "fort!" And this proved the beginning of her
 recovery. §

The Rev. Mr. *Peacock*, whom the writer of the
 Account styles, "a man of God," when on his
 death-

† *Alexipharm. adversus desperationem. Autore M. Nicolas Lau-
 rentio, p. 63, &c. The Rev. Mr. Robert Bolton's Instructions,
 &c. p. 359, 360.*

§ *The Rev. Mr. Thomas White's sermon at St. Giles's, Cripplegate,
 London, 1653,*

death-bed, suffered so much torment of mind, by an apprehension that God had forsaken him, as to cry out, after recounting some smaller sins, in such language as this: "I feel now a hell in my conscience. Oh, my heart is miserable! Oh miserable and woful! The burthen of my sins lies so heavy upon me, I doubt it will break my heart. Oh how woful and miserable is my state, that I must thus converse with hell-hounds!" When he was asked, if he would pray? he answered, "I cannot." When it was said, suffer us to pray for you; he replied, "Take not the name of God in vain, by praying for a reprobate." But when the tempest of his mind was somewhat allayed, he said, "Truly my heart and soul have been deeply troubled with temptations, and stings of conscience; but I thank God, they are ended in a great measure. Wherefore I desire, that I be not branded with the note of a cast-away. Concerning my inconsiderate speeches in my temptations, I humbly and heartily ask mercy of God for them. —God be praised, I feel such comfort. Oh, the sea is not more full of water, nor the sun of light, than the Lord of mercy! Indeed, his mercies are ten thousand times more. What cause have I to magnify the great goodness of God, that hath humbled, nay rather, exalted, such a wretch, and of so base condition, to an estate so glorious; The Lord hath honoured me with his goodness. I am sure he hath provided a glorious kingdom for me. The joy that I feel in my heart is inexpressible." †

† *Bolton*, *ibid.* p. 86—88.

The pious wife of the Rev. Mr. *Patrick Simson* fell sick, and during her illness was in great trouble of mind, which seemed to advance to distraction. Her eminently pious husband, while she lay in this sad condition, went one morning very early into his garden, spent many hours alone in prayer, where he was favoured with extraordinary nearness to God, and arose from the ground, with a full assurance, that his wife should be speedily recovered to a happy state of mind. He returned to her, prayed with her, and while he mentioned in prayer *Jacob's wrestling*, she sat up in the bed, drew aside the curtain, and said, "Thou art this day *Jacob*, who hast *wrestled*, and also *prevailed*, and now God hath made good his word, which he spake to you this morning; for I am plucked out of the hand of Satan, and he shall have no more power over me." She continued, from that time, to enjoy the most delightful communion with God, and to converse with her friends in the most edifying manner, till the day of her death, August 13, 1601.*†

Mrs. *Brettergh*, notwithstanding her eminently holy and heavenly temper and conversation, yet, in her last illness, was in great conflict of spirit, accused herself of pride, thought she had no faith, but was an hypocrite, would even cast the bible from her, and say, "It was indeed the book of life, but I have read it unprofitably, and therefore fear it is become to me the book of death." She complained, that her sins had made her a prey to Satan, a disgrace to religion, and a shame to her

† *Fleming's fulfilling of scripture*, fol. p. 272. 12mo. p. 437—439.

her husband; accused herself of impatience, bewailed her want of experiencing the Spirit of God; doubted of her election, wished that she had never been born, or that she had been made any other creature, and often with tears cried out, "wo, wo, wo! a weak, a woful, a wretched woman!" Once she would have said, *lead us not into temptation*, but stopped, saying, "I may not pray, I must not pray." A christian friend took much pains with her, reminded her of the mercy of God, the merits of Christ, the many gracious promises contained in the word of God. The day before her death, [May 31, 1601] she was set at perfect liberty, and filled with abundant spiritual consolation. Among many other expressions of her joy and gratitude, she said, "my soul hath been compassed about with the terror of death. A roaring wilderness of wo was within me. But blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord my God, who hath not left me comfortless; but, like a good shepherd, hath brought me into a place of rest, even to the sweet running waters of life! Oh, blessed be the Lord, who hath thus comforted me, and hath brought me into a place sweeter than the garden of *Eden*! Oh the joy, the joy, the delightful joy that I feel! Oh how wonderful, how wonderful, how wonderful is this joy! Oh praise the Lord for his mercy, and for this joy which my soul feels full well!"

The rev. Mr. *William Thomson*, a pious minister in *New England*, was for several years laid aside from his publick ministry by religious melancholy. Many neighbouring ministers and private christians

continued

§ Dr. Gibbons's memoirs of eminently pious women, vol. ii. p. 237—246.

continued their earnest pleadings for him in prayer, till it pleased God to give him perfect recovery, and fill him with unutterable joy. He died triumphantly, December 10, 1666. *

The rev. Mr. *John Warham*, another pious minister in *New England*, was at different intervals in such distress of religious melancholy, that when he administered the Lord's-Supper to others, he declined partaking of it himself, through a fearful apprehension that it did not belong to him. His peace and comfort were restored to him at the close of life. † Other excellent ministers, now in glory, have acted the same part, at the Lord's-Table, and from the same cause.

The rev. Mr. *Timothy Rogers's* horrors and agonies of mind, under this affliction, from an apprehension that God had forsaken him, as we have already seen, were inexpressibly great. It also appears, that some near relations of his were exercised with the same affliction; so that his case might properly be called natural or hereditary. Yet, thro' divine goodness, he was restored to health and cheerfulness, enabled to resume his faithful services for Christ as a minister, and expressed his gratitude to God for his own recovery, and his kind endeavours to assist the recovery of others, in two distinct publications; viz. *Practical Discourses on sickness and recovery*; and *A Discourse concerning trouble of mind, and the disease of melancholy*. His epistle dedicatory to the former was dated Sept. 22, 1690, and to the latter, Sept. 8, 1691. In his
preface

* *Dr. Cotton Mather's Hist. of New Eng'land.* Book iii. p. 119.

† *Dr. Cotton Mather's Hist. ibid.* p. 121.

preface to the last of these publications [p. xxiii.] he says, " I have known several that were long afflicted with trouble of mind and melancholy, " Mr. *Roswell* and Mr. *Porter*, both ministers, the latter whereof was *six years* oppressed with this distemper; yet afterwards both rejoiced in the light of God's countenance. I myself was near *two years* in great pain of body, and greater pain of soul, and without any prospect of peace or help; and yet God hath revived me in his sovereign grace and mercy. And there have been several heretofore sorely perplexed with great inward and outward trouble, whom God, after they were wonderfully refreshed. Mr. *Robert Bruce*, some time ago minister at *Edinburgh*, was *twenty years* in the terrors of conscience, and yet delivered afterwards. Mr. *Cook*, who lived sometime at *Kidderminster* while Mr. *Baxter* was there, meeting with some difficulties in his affairs, fell into a melancholy, which ended in distraction. Some of Mr. *Baxter's* hearers were for spending some time in fasting and prayer on Mr. *Cook's* account. Mr. *Baxter* speaks of Mr. *Cook*, as an ancient, sober, godly man, but discouraged their fasting and praying on his account, having no hope of a cure, as Mr. *Cook's* distemper was natural or hereditary. Nevertheless some would not be dissuaded, but fasted and prayed at Mr. *Cook's* house, with great importunity, and continued it once a fortnight, for several months. At length he sensibly grew better, and by degrees finally recovered. *

A pious woman at *Kidderminster*, of a later date

* The Rev. Mr. *Baxter's History of his life and times*. fol. p. 81. Dr. *Calamy's Abridg.* vol. i. p. 401.

as severely exercised with religious melancholy, in
 er youth, which continued a year or more, and
 om which she seemed to be perfectly recovered,
 answer to many prayers. Her early piety, after
 ch an affliction, was followed with a more remark-
 ble progress in a religious course, together with
 great chearfulness of temper, and distinguishing fit-
 nesses to administer comfort to others. Nevertheless
 bout *twenty years* after, it pleased God, that her
 affliction returned with redoubled force. Her dis-
 nesses of mind was then most horrible. Her previous
 acquaintance with scripture and scriptural truths
 only furnished her with so much the greater capa-
 city to argue against her own peace, and perplex
 all that endeavoured to administer relief to her.
 he treated divine promises, and every exercise of
 devotion, as things with which she had nothing to
 do, and which only tended to increase her torment.
 In this dreadful state she continued more than a
 year. Her second recovery was perfect and lasting.
 Since that time, she not only enjoyed a chearful
 and composed state of mind, but an uncommon
 measure of *joy and peace in believing*. This was
 not interrupted by reason of bodily weaknesses and
 pains, though she had such afflictions in abundance.
 She died, full of divine comforts, Nov. 1779, aged 62.
 By a serious reflection upon one or other of these
 instances, it may please God, to cause some beams
 of hope to break in upon the most benighted mind.
 And from all of them, taken together, we may
 discern the propriety of what has been suggested,
 [chap. 1.] that according to the observation and
 judgment of the best physicians and divines, " This
 " affliction

“affliction is more troublesome and lasting than
“dangerous.”

SECTION III.

Concluding advices both to the afflicted and the recovered

There are a few advices, with which these observations on religious melancholy may pertinently conclude, and its cure be happily promoted and improved.

While the distemper remains, but with such a degree of mitigation, as to admit of friendly conversation, let the afflicted be intreated to cast their burthen on the Lord. Let them be persuaded, that his anger is but for a moment; that in his favour is life; and though weeping may endure for a night, yet joy cometh in the morning. Shew them what reason there is to hope, that it is more particularly said to persons in their circumstances, *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.* Often remind them that God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth those that are cast down. Especially assist them in considering, how this Father of mercies left his own dear Son to die out, amidst the thickest darkness, and the most agonising pain, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Let them again and again be entreated to consider, with the most particular and serious application, *If these things, which are so uncon-*

ably more dreadful, *are done in a green tree*, why should it be thought strange concerning any afflictions of the present state, that they should be *done in the dry*? Put them upon asking themselves, *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins*? Excite them farther to ask, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me*? And shew them the propriety of adding, *Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* But if they cannot be prevailed upon to add, what is nevertheless so perfectly reasonable and scriptural; yet let them be urged to an absolute submission to the will of God, and to resign themselves to his disposal, that he may *lead them to heaven in his own chosen way*, even in a way of affliction and darkness, for a time, yea though it should be long and tedious; but which so many have found to be *the right way to a city of habitation*. And, as an example of submission and resignation, never enough to be admired and imitated, though we shall always come far short of it, let the friends of the melancholy set before them, and leave with them, that of our blessed Saviour in his agony, when he said, *O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*

What if the melancholy should *die under their affliction*? Unusual and awful as such an event may be, it may justly be said to their afflicted friends, *Sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.* "It is very true, says the Rev. Mr. Tim. Rogers, the servants of God may die, under the apprehensions

“ fions of his displeasure. They may think them-
 “ selves the heirs of the curse, and find themselves
 “ to be the heirs of glory. Their sun may set
 “ a cloud, and yet arise in a marvellous light. As
 “ Mr. *Dod* once answered a minister, who asked
 “ what he could say to a pious person going out
 “ of the world, and had no comfort? — What
 “ will you say to the Son of God, himself, who
 “ when he was dying, complained he was forsaken?
 “ faken? Many-a-one wanders about here, like
 “ *Noah's dove, finding no rest, whom God will*
 “ *take into his ark.* Those eyes which were closed
 “ in tears, shall in peace see the Lord. We
 “ must not judge such persons, whose troubles con-
 “ tinued to the last moment of their lives. If
 “ they have been holy in their conversation, they
 “ shall enter into rest, though by a way that
 “ is very dark and frightful. *Moses*, by the dis-
 “ pleasure of God against him for his provocation
 “ died, and came short of that *Canaan*, which he
 “ very much desired to possess; but when he was
 “ in heaven, he was fully satisfied; and in his
 “ God he met with all that he could before de-
 “ fire.” †

If the distemper has been removed, and health and
 usefulness in life restored and confirmed, but atten-
 tion to serious piety neglected; this is a case the
 more pitiable and grievous. One bad disease
 gone, but the very worst remains. Permit me to
 say to such persons. — You have been distressed by
 sin; and why return to it again? You were con-
 demning yourselves for want of repentance toward

† *Rogers on Melan.* *ibid.* p. 184—186.

God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and why so indifferent about them now? You have felt something of *the terror of the Lord*, and you thought it dreadful and insupportable; but is not future punishment infinitely more dreadful, than any thing you have ever felt? And in order to escape it, why do you not employ health, and all the most vigorous powers of the mind, for securing an interest in Christ, and salvation by him? Your hearts have been softened by severe affliction; and is there not great danger of their growing so much the harder, by *returning again to folly*? Your case was pitiable before, by reason of affliction; but it is now more than pitiable, it is in the highest degree dangerous, to have such affliction not *yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness*; to let such promising appearances of *goodness go away, as a morning cloud, and as the early dew*. Does not the solemn caution belong to you, which our Lord gave to the man which had an infirmity thirty eight years, and whom he had healed, *Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*? But if every caution and warning be in vain, how much will it grieve and distress your religious friends, especially those who have taken much pains with you, while you were afflicted in mind, to instruct, comfort and encourage you? There is not little weight in that old remark, "Unmortified strength posts hard to hell, but sanctified weakness creeps fast to heaven." God grant you may think of these things, and lay them to heart, before it is for ever too late!

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There are others, I trust, *whose piety began under this affliction, and continues with them.* Happy distress! It proved the effectual means, through divine grace, of fixing the roving thoughts on enquiries and pursuits the most salutary. It made the once pleasing but delusive scenes of mortal life wearisome and gloomy, that the divine life might unveil its beauties, and be seen in all its infinite importance. Happy persons! Now your affliction is removed, you are manifesting the real change begun in your souls while in the shadow of death by *walking in newness of life.* It may now be emphatically said of you, *While sitting in darkness you first began to see great light; and to you who sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.* You may each of you now thankfully say concerning yourselves, “*It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.*” “*Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.*” “*My flesh trembles for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgment.*” “*Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, and I seemed to have had a commission, even to make a full end of me; but thy sovereign mercy is interposed, and therefore now thy commandments are my delights.*” Thus your recollection of the most painful sensations you have felt, and the most gloomy scenes through which you have passed, may be so compared with the advantages you are now reaping, as to adopt the Apostle’s triumphant language, *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* An heart-affecting sense of your peculiar obligation

Obligations to divine mercy should likewise prompt you to ask, *What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits towards me?* and in the sincerity of your soul, and with intire devotedness to God through Christ, to profess and resolve, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell have hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*

They also, whom *this awful disease* found possessed of true piety, and have been restored from the grievance by healing mercy, will most chearfully and affectionately join in correspondent expressions of gratitude and praise, and resolutions for better and persevering obedience. “God has prevented us with his goodness, (as the Rev. Mr. Tim. Rogers well supposes them to say,) when he saw nothing in us but impatience and unbelief. When we were like *Jonah, in the belly of hell*, his bowels yearned over us, and his power brought us safe to land. What did we to hasten his deliverance, or to obtain his mercy? No more did we contribute to our restoration, than we do to the rising of the sun, or the approach of day. And now the morning is come, and such a morning as we never hoped to see, let us *walk as children of the day*; that so being come out of the

"furnace, we may be as gold that is refined. Let
 "us rejoice, that the face of God now shines upon
 "us; but let us tremble to think, what would
 "become of us, should it be hid again. Let us
 "not have a trembling of distrust, but of vigilance,
 "and of holy care; not to doubt of the
 "promises of God, but to keep down our own
 "pride and carnal security. Let us pray that, as
 "he has *set our feet upon a rock*, so he would
 "*establish our goings.*"* O how solicitous will such
 be, to improve returning health, and composed spirits,
 for the noblest purposes! How desirous will they be,
 ever to lie more humble before God in a sense of their
 meanness and vileness! To be more filled, at all times,
 with admiring thoughts of the riches of divine grace
 in a Redeemer! More abundantly to *rejoice in Christ Jesus,*
 and have no confidence in the flesh! To attain higher
 degrees of self-denial, of superiority to earth and earthly
 things, and of heavenly-mindedness! To be more watchful
 and circumspect, more holy and exemplary in their
 daily walk! To live nearer to God, and maintain
 more intimate communion and fellowship with the Father
 and his Son Jesus Christ! To have greater zeal for the
 glory of God, and the interest of Christ in the world!
 To be more sweetly resigned and submissive to all the
 dispensations of divine providence! And to be made more
 ready and willing to depart, and be with Christ, as far
 better either than the best services for him, or the best
 enjoyment of him, while upon earth! Whenever any
 opportunity is presented to them, how much

* Rogers on Melancholy, *ibid.* p. 426—428.

is it in their heart with the tenderest sympathy,
 to weep with them that weep; to comfort the feeble-
 minded; and to say to any that are distressed in
 spirit, *Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I*
will declare what he hath done for my soul! In a
 word, it is their highest ambition to live, hence-
 forth, a life of faith and prayer, a life of joy and
 praise; and therefore they are often adopting the
 language and sentiments of *David, Bless the Lord*
O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy
name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all
his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who
healeth all thy diseases.



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